

EI-547 CD



BUCKS COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION

MANAGEMENT

ASSOCIATION

January 23, 2004

FEB 2 2004
BUCKS COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION
MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION

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Surface Transportation Board
Office of the Secretary
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

AB-859 Sub-No. IX

Dear Madam/Sir:

The Bucks County Transportation Management Association stresses its opposition to the notice of intent to abandon rail service on a 3.7-mile section of rail right of way, Northampton County, Pennsylvania. Said right of way is owned by Norfolk Southern Railway Company.

The Association, in partnership with state elected officials and county officials in this area, is moving forward with plans to reinstate commuter rail service on an existing rail right of way from Norristown, PA to Quakertown, PA. The section in question is part of this line, about 8 miles north of Quakertown. This line represents the only existing rail link between Philadelphia and the Allentown/Bethlehem area. Recent development and population growth are cited in a June, 2000 study that recommends reinstatement of commuter rail to connect to Philadelphia, with an eye toward re-establishing the link through the Lehigh Valley (Allentown/Bethlehem) and on to New York City.

This proposed abandonment would forever eliminate any possibility of restoring commuter rail service through this area. We strongly urge that all potential impacts be reviewed, and that the line remain intact. Please inform as to any documentation you may require regarding our proposed commuter rail project. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

William D. Rickett

Executive Director

Cc: Bucks County Legislative Delegation

Hon. Edward G. Rendell, Governor

Senator Rick Santorum

Senator Arlen Specter

Congressman James Greenwood

Bucks County Commissioners

General Attorney, Norfolk Southern Corp.

Executive Director

William D. Rickett

NOTICE OF INTENT TO ABANDON RAIL SERVICE

Pennsylvania Lines LLC (PRR) and Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) give notice that on or about January 21, 2004, they intend to file with the Surface Transportation Board (STB), Washington, DC 20423, a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—*Exempt Abandonments*, permitting PRR's abandonment and NSR's discontinuance of service on a 3.70-mile line of railroad between milepost EK-53.0, near Hellertown, and milepost EK-56.7, near Bethlehem, which traverses through United States Postal Service ZIP Codes 18015, 18016, 18017, 18018, 18019, 18020 and 18055 in Northampton County, Pennsylvania. The proceeding will be docketed as No. AB-859 (Sub-No. 1X) as to PRR and No. AB-290 (Sub No. 245X) as to NSR.

The STB's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will generally prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA), which will normally be available 25 days after the filing of the notice of exemption. Comments on environmental and energy matters should be filed no later than 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public and will be addressed in an STB decision. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA or make inquiries regarding environmental matters by writing to the Section of Environmental Analysis, Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001 or by calling that office at 202-565-1545.

Appropriate offers of financial assistance to continue rail service can be filed with the STB. Requests for environmental conditions, public use conditions, or rail banking/trails use also can be filed with the STB. An original and 10 copies of any pleading that raises matters other than environmental issues (such as trails use, public use, and offers of financial assistance) must be filed directly with the STB's Office of the Secretary, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001 [See 49 CFR 1104.1(a) and 1104.3(a)], and one copy must be served on applicant's representative [See 49 CFR 1104.12(a)]. Questions regarding offers of financial assistance, public use or trails use may be directed to the STB's Office of Public Assistance at 202-927-7597. Copies of any comments or requests for conditions should be served on the applicant's representative: James R. Paschall, General Attorney, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Three Commercial Place, Norfolk, VA 23510-9241, (757) 629-2759.